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FM AMCONSUL SHANGHAI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9387
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SHANGHAI 02272

BEIJING PASS CHENGDU

E.O.12356:DECL:OADR

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SUBJ: BLOOD AND BITTERNESS: A SOLDIER'S TALE OF TIANANMEN

11. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.

12. SUMMARY: A SOLDIER ATTACHED TO THE 38TH ARMY REPORTEDLY TOLD VILLAGERS IN HIS HOMETOWN HE WAS TRICKED INTO FIRING ON UNARMED DEMONSTRATORS ON JUNE 4, 1989, IN BEIJING. WE REPORT THIS STORY, TOLD TO US THIRD-HAND, AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE TYPE OF TIANANMEN TALE CIRCULATING IN RURAL EAST CHINA NEARLY TEN MONTHS AFTER THE BEIJING MASSACRE. END SUMMARY.

13. A LONG-TIME (NON-DSB) SERVANT OF A SHANGHAI CONGENOFF (PROTECT) TOLD US THE FOLLOWING STORY UPON HER RETURN FROM VISITING HER NATIVE VILLAGE DEEP IN RURAL ZHEJIANG.

THE BEIJING MASSACRE

14. OUR SOURCE MET AN OLD FRIEND WHILE IN HER NATIVE VILLAGE WHO CONFIDED THAT HER SON WAS IN TIANANMEN ON JUNE 4, 1989, WITH THE 38TH ARMY. HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES WERE ALL SHOOTING IN THE AIR UNTIL WORD WAS PASSED THROUGH THE RANKS THAT ONE HUNDRED OF THEIR NUMBER HAD DISAPPEARED--PRESUMABLY KILLED BY STUDENTS. A QUICK CHECK CONFIRMED THAT OVER ONE HUNDRED WERE MISSING. THE SOLDIER AND HIS COLLEAGUES THEN BECAME SO UPSET THAT, WHEN ORDERED TO SHOOT INTO THE CROWD (THE STORY PLACES THE SOLDIER AT THE SOUTH-EAST CORNER OF TIANANMEN--NO TIME GIVEN), THEY OPENED FIRE WITH MACHINE-GUNS INTO THE HUMAN WALL BEFORE THEM. WHEN THE RAMPAGE WAS OVER, THERE WERE OVER ONE THOUSAND DEAD ON THE STREETS, ALMOST ALL ORDINARY CIVILIANS. THE SOLDIERS THEN POURED FUEL OVER AND BURNED THE BODIES, WHICH WERE LATER FLOWN OUT BY HELICOPTER.

15. THE SOLDIER'S UNIT WAS SOON REMOVED TO THE BEIJING COUNTRYSIDE, AND CONFINED TO ITS CAMP. OFFICERS TOLD THE MEN NOT TO THINK OF WHEN THEY MIGHT LEAVE THE PLA, IMPLYING THAT THEY MIGHT NOT BE ALLOWED TO RETURN TO CIVILIAN LIFE FOLLOWING THEIR TOUR OF MILITARY DUTY.

16. THE SOLDIER INSISTED ON SEEING HIS MOTHER AND--DESPITE THE THREAT OF LOSING BONUS MONEY--WAS GIVEN LEAVE LAST SEPTEMBER. HIS MOTHER (THE STORYTELLER) SAID THAT, UPON HEARING HER SON'S TALE, SHE FORCED HIM TO GO TO A NEARBY CHRISTIAN CHURCH FOR TWENTY STRAIGHT DAYS TO BEG FORGIVENESS. THE YOUNG SOLDIER IS BITTER. HE DOES NOT BELIEVE NOW THAT HIS 100 COLLEAGUES DESERTED FROM THE RANKS, ONLY TO ALL SHOW UP LATER, AS HE WAS TOLD. HE FEELS HE WAS TRICKED INTO FIRING ON DEFENSELESS CIVILIANS.

17. WHILE ON LEAVE, ORDERS FROM HIS UNIT WERE PASSED THROUGH LOCAL OFFICIALS THAT HE WAS NOT TO TALK TO ANYONE ABOUT HIS MILITARY SERVICE WHILE IN THE VILLAGE. HIS MOTHER WAS ALSO APPROACHED AND TOLD TO KEEP QUIET.

18. COMMENT: WE DON'T DOUBT OUR SOURCE IS REPEATING THE STORY AS IT WAS TOLD HER, BUT CLEARLY ENOUGH TIME HAS LAPSED TO ACCOUNT FOR SUBSTANTIAL EMBROIDERY. WE PRESENT IT HERE LESS AS A CONTRIBUTION TO THE "EYE-WITNESS ACCOUNT" LITERATURE THAN TO DEMONSTRATE THAT GRISLY TIANANMEN STORIES CONTINUE TO CIRCULATE THROUGHOUT THE LAND. END COMMENT.

WARDLAW